

CAMBRIA STEEL COMPANY,
EAST BOILER HOUSE
(Bethlehem Steel Company,
Pattern Storage Building)
Cambria Iron Works
Lower Works
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-312-C

HAER
PA
11-JOTO,
137C-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
CAMBRIA STEEL COMPANY, EAST BOILER HOUSE
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Location: Lower Works, Johnstown, Cambria
County, Pennsylvania

Quad: Johnstown, Pennsylvania

UTM: 17 E.676380 N.446725017

Date of Construction: ca 1898

Fabricator: unknown

Present Owner: Bethlehem Steel Corporation

Present Use: Pattern storage

Significance: Improvements to the early blast
furnace plant were made in the late
1890s, shortly after the formation
of the Cambria Steel Company,
including the construction of new
boiler houses. Dating from about
1898, the eastern boiler house, a
steel-frame structure with brick
walls and a brick floor, originally
housed twelve boilers that fired
the blowing engines in the
adjoining Blowing Engine House.

Historian: Gray Fitzsimons

Project Information:

The results of the study of Cambria County were published in
1990: Fitzsimons, Gray, editor, Blair County and Cambria County,
Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial
Sites (Washington, D.C.: America's Industrial Heritage Project
(AIHP) and HABS/HAER, National Park Service). The contents of the
publication were transmitted to the Library of Congress as
individual reports. Research notes, field photos and copies of
historic photos collected during the project were transmitted to
the AIHP Collection, Special Collections, Stapleton Library,
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705.

HISTORY

This two-story building contains a steel frame, riveted steel Fink roof trusses, steel columns, which are composed of channel sections and riveted lacing bars, common-bond brick walls, flat-arched door and window openings, many of which have been infilled with brick, and a stone foundation. It measures 207' x 42' and adjoins the former Blowing Engine House. The first floor extends slightly below grade and forms a basement where ashes from the boilers were deposited. The second floor has been used since the 1930s as a storage area for wood patterns used in the pattern shop. The old boiler house retains its original wood double doors. None of the boilers survive.

One of the first buildings erected by the Cambria Iron Company at the Lower Works was a blowing engine house, used in conjunction with the original four blast furnaces. Coal-fired boilers provided the blowing engines with steam. Improvements to this early blast furnace plant were made in the late 1890s, shortly after the formation of the Cambria Steel Company. These included the construction of new boiler houses. Dating from about 1898, the eastern boiler house, a steel-frame structure with brick walls and a brick floor, originally housed twelve boilers, which fired the blowing engines in the adjoining Blowing Engine House. The engines forced air through the hot-blast stoves into the four blast furnaces. Ashes from the boilers appear to have been dumped into the basement, where they were removed manually by shovel. Shortly after Bethlehem Steel retired Blast Furnace Nos. 1-4 in the 1920s, the boiler house was converted into a pattern storage facility, a function it continues to serve. Another boiler house of a similar design, also dating from about 1898, is located just west of this building and is used for pattern storage.

SOURCES

Galasso, Ralph. Pattern-Maker, Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Johnstown Plant, Lower Works Division, Interview February 1987.

"Key Plan, Johnstown Plants: February 16, 1923; revised January 26, 1927, March 29, 1930, and February 13, 1939," (copy available at the Canal Museum, Center for Canal History and Technology, Easton, Pennsylvania).

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Sanborn Map Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn
Map Company, 1891 and 1911.